Survey of availability of atomic and nuclear minerals

2173. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has surveyed the Atomic and Nuclear minerals availability in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the study;

(c) whether Government is aware of the fact that lot of minerals like Uranium, Thorium, Molyblendum are found in soils in the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to exploit them and to curb the robberies being done by sand quaries in these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) of the Department of Atomic Energy is engaged in survey, exploration and evaluation of Atomic and Nuclear Minerals of Uranium, Thorium, Niobium, Tantalum, Beryllium, Zirconium and Lithium required for the Atomic Energy Programme of the Country.

(b) AMD has so far established about 1,07,268 tonnes of *insitu* Uranium resources (U_30_8), 461.30 million tonnes of ilmenite, 26.82 million tonnes of rutile, 16.07 million tonnes of leucoxene, 28.29 million tonnes of zircon, 10.21 million tonnes of monazite, 150.63 million tonnes of garnet and 190.31 million tonnes of sillimanite.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. AMD has identified about 3.21 million tonnes of Thorium Minerals Monazite. No significant concentration of Molybdenum is noticed in beach sands of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Indian Rare Earth Ltd. (IREL), a Public Sector Undertaking of this Department has mining and mineral separation plants to produce monazite (which is a phosphate of uranium, thorium and rare earths) along with other minerals *viz.* ilmenite, rutile, zircon, sillimanite and garnet from the coastal areas of Manavalakurichi located in Tamil Nadu near Kanyakumari and at Chavara located in Kerala. Under the policy for exploration of Beach sand minerals certain Private parties are engaged in Mineral Separation, but not for Uranium, Thorium and Molybdenum. No cases of robberies of Uranium, Thorium and Molybdenum by sand quarries in the coastal areas of Kerala & Tamil Nadu were reported.

Uranium mines in India

2174. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of progress made under Atomic Mineral Division for identifying uranium mines in India during the last 30 years and the number of uranium mines functioning in the country as on date, location-wise; and

(b) the details of the funds released for mining Uranium during the years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 showing the quantum of uranium explored, mine-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration & Research (AMD), a constituent unit under the Department of Atomic energy (DAE) has established about 1,07,268 tonnes of insitu uranium (U_3O_8) reserves spread across ten States. After assessing commercial viability, mining is taken up by Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL), a Public Sector Undertaking of the Department. At present, UCIL operates five